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ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT: IMPLEMENTATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS CONVENTION TO COMBAT DESERTIFICATION IN THOSE COUNTRIES EXPERIENCING SERIOUS DROUGHT AND/OR DESERTIFICATION, PARTICULARLY IN AFRICA

Implementation of General Assembly resolution 50/114

Note by the Secretary-General

1. The partnership between the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) was signed on 26 April 1995, committing both organizations to working together on sustainable dryland management through the implementation of the Convention to Combat Desertification. On the basis of this partnership, UNDP/United Nations Sudano-Sahelian Office (UNSO) and UNEP have collaborated on two joint initiatives, namely, on assessment, monitoring, and information systems and on a framework for advocacy and outreach.

2. On assessing and monitoring desertification UNEP and UNSO have collaborated on the development of desertification indicators. A joint initiative on desertification assessment and monitoring is under way. Both have contributed to a matrix of indicators for the implementation of the Convention and to the development of a methodology for impact indicators. Future collaboration will be developed in the context of the Committee on Science and Technology's work programme, under the Convention, as part of an agreed arrangement for scientific networking adopted by the first session of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention. (A report of the Secretary-General on the outcome of the conference of the Parties will be before the Assembly at its current session.)

3. In collaboration with other core partners UNEP and UNDP/UNSO are in the process of designing a framework for advocacy and outreach. The aim of this framework is to facilitate a new generation of cost-effective and coordinated efforts to increase knowledge and awareness on dryland issues, building

partnerships and drawing on the strengths and interests of the partners involved.

4. Financial support to the work of UNDP/UNSO from 1995 to date amounts to a total of US$ 13,718,660, the bulk received through the Trust Fund to Combat Desertification and Drought. Traditionally the Nordic countries, including Denmark, Finland, Norway, and Sweden, as well as the Netherlands have been major supporters. They have continued with significant contributions in support of the evolving substantive work of UNSO under the Convention. In addition, Australia, Italy, France, Luxembourg, Switzerland, Monaco and Portugal and a few private donors have contributed to the Trust Fund. It is particularly worth noting that a number of affected developing countries have contributed to the Trust Fund, including Benin, Burkina Faso, Ghana, Lesotho, Namibia, Zambia, Zimbabwe and Uganda.

5. Recognizing these contributions and in view of the major responsibilities assigned to UNDP by the first session of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention to Combat Desertification (document ICCD/COP(1)/CRP.1), UNDP welcomes increased and additional contributions to the Trust Fund to Combat Desertification and Drought in support of the implementation of the Convention in affected programme countries.